

# Homebrew Bronze Cleaners

*By Bill Whitney*

Every now and then you come across something in a nautically oriented publication that not only applies to a Friendship sloop, but also really works. Here are two recipes for homemade bronze cleaner that I picked up from an old copy of *Practical Sailor*. I have edited it slightly to remove superfluous information.

“Lest you think multi-billion-dollar chemical companies and their geeks in white lab coats have a lock on cleaning your bronze, there are numerous homebrewed cleaning solutions that folks claim have the ability to put a shine on your bronze and a gleam in your eye. We decided to test two of these strange brews. Below are the recipes and our test results. These recipes were pulled from the Internet,

## HOME BREW NO. 1: SALT AND VINEGAR PASTE

**Recipe:** Dissolve 3 teaspoons of salt into 1 cup of white vinegar. Add enough flour to make a paste, and then scoop the paste onto a clean sponge and polish. Rinse with hot water and buff dry with a soft cloth.

**Result:** This polish worked surprisingly well. While it took a little scrubbing, and we had to let the tougher stains soak for 10 to 15 minutes, it worked well overall and earned a rating of “Good” on our test scale.

## HOME BREW NO. 2: LEMON PASTE

**Recipe:** Polish with a soft cloth soaked in a solution of lemon juice and baking soda, or sprinkle baking soda on a slice of lemon and scrub. (We made a paste as in Brew No. 1.)

**Result:** After the mini-volcanic reaction of mixing lemon juice and baking soda settled down, the resulting paste powered off the stains exceptionally well with minimal scrubbing. We tried using a slice of lemon, but the cloth held up better and worked best while rubbing—it was also less messy. This home brew polish earned a solid rating of “Very good” on our test scale, comparable with many of our top commercially produced performers.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the results in the home brew category were pretty impressive, particularly considering that they have all natural ingredients and that both are economical to make. While the Brews Nos. 1 and 2 cleaned the bronze, they lacked the “luster” of products such as the *Miracle Cloth*. Following up the cleaning with a coat of wax would add shine and additional protection.”

I like, and have used, both recipes. I personally like Home Brew #2 for two reasons. We usually don't have enough salt or flour on board to mix a batch for recipe #1, but we certainly have more than enough left-over lemons (or limes) from our evening consumption of Tangueray gin and tonic. So raise a glass to Home Brew #2!